

Organizing Water in Florida: A self-selection process

Honey Rand, Ph.D., APR

www.eprgroup.com



Talk About Organizing Water

- The big examples
 - Tampa Bay
 - The Peace River Authority
 - FGUA
 - The Withlacoochee River Authority
 - WAV (Volusian Alliance)
- But then... there's
 - Jacksonville
 - Orlando Utilities Commission
 - Broward County IWRP

The Tampa Bay Story

- The local governments had permits, they wanted them renewed
- The District did not want to renew them
- Local governments and the District spent lots of money only to decide at the end that it was better to work together

And it is, even though...

- The District gave money, the Authority was reorganized and we still have problems.
 - The Water Treatment Plant does not work to the capacity that it was originally planned
 - The desal plant was acquired on time and on budget, with no risk to the public purse (it's still not working as advertised.)
 - The new 15-billion gallon reservoir is now in litigation. Doesn't work.
- BUT it is important to keep in mind that these problems are not a result of the way our water is organized.

We are still better off

- Frameworks, ownership, agreements and processes were so tightly bound that,

“It will be Armageddon before anyone gets out of that,” Ed de la Parte

- Do we love one another? Nope.
- Are we all happy with all outcomes? No
- ...but we are in it together.

How did we pull it off?

- The Four Big Factors
- To be successful in changing the way you organize water, you will need a persuasive argument in 3 of 4 of these factors.
 - Economic
 - Environmental
 - Social
 - Political

Factor Analysis - Social

- There are people, there are organizations who will oppose any move to change. They will be suspicious, they will be afraid, they may be threatened at the loss of money or position or visibility...to change things, you need more people for you than against.

Factor Analysis - Economic

- It's a harsh economic reality that we're dealing with today. To advance a change in the way water is organized you are going to need significant and clear economic motivation...and the ability to explain it to different groups with competing agendas and interests...and that won't be enough...

Factor Analysis- Environment

- Because of your unique location and the responsibility you have to protect the one and only Everglades, your plan to organize water MUST have a clear and strong environmental motive. And, you will need credible, visible outsiders to assure your own people that it does.

Factor Analysis – Political

- You live in a complex social and political dynamic, here on the lower East coast. Intuitively you know the political challenges that will come. If you are to reorganize the way you handle water, manage water, cooperate or collaborate on water, you will need to provide real political leadership.

Communication

- Every single factor has a critical element of communication.
- For success you will need to make the communication supporting the four factors a REAL priority.
- You will have to communicate as if it matters, because it does.
- Even if you decide to NOT reorganize your water, someone needs to explain why.
- ...AND, someone needs to be responsible for the communication or it will fail.

Your Success

- People use Tampa Bay to argue for and against authorities or other organization of water.
- It is neither. It is the solution of one community.
- The politics, policies and people at the table determine the possible alternatives.
- Your success will be based on how you define “the public” and therefore “the public interest.”

Two Big Ideas

- Steve Seibert said that to reach agreement in Tampa Bay, they had to, “leave their egos and their logos at the door.”
- In signing the Constitution Benjamin Franklin said, “I agree to this document not because I say it is the best, but because I know of none better.”
- In the end it will be leadership and communication that make the case to change—or not.